GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:304
ANSWERED ON:27.02.2008
POACHING OF RHINOS IN ASSAM
Appadurai Shri M.;Nandy Shri Amitava;Sarma Dr. Arun Kumar

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received any complaint regarding large scale poaching of Rhinos in the Kaziranga National Park and its adjacent habitat in Assam;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of encroachers in the park and the action plan of the Government to evict them; and

(d) the action taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to protect the animals?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS(SHRI S.REGUPATHY)

(a)&(b) As per the information received from the State Government, 18 rhinos were poached in 2007 and 4 in 2008 so far in the Kaziranga National Park and adjacent areas in Assam.

(c) As reported by the State Government, 169 families continue to occupy part of the Sixth addition area of Kaziranga National Park.The eviction is pending because of an order of the Hon'ble Guwahati High Court on the notification of the Sixth addition area.

(d) The steps taken by Government of India to protect wildlife and prevent poaching are as under:

1. The Central Government has enacted the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 to deal with the issues of wildlife crime. Stringent penalties are imposed on the offenders for the contravention of the provisions of the Act.

2. A network of National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries has been set up across the country to protect wildlife.

3. Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, with a network a five Regional and three Sub Regional Offices, has been set up to control wildlife crime.

4. Financial support is being provided under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme −Development of National Parks and Sanctuaries, Project Tiger and Project Elephant, to State/UT Governments for the conservation and development of wildlife and its habitats including those of Rhinos.

5. India is a signatory to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) that regulates international trade in wildlife and its derivatives.

6. India has bilateral arrangements with China and Nepal on combating wildlife crime.

In addition, the State Government has also taken the following measures to protect wild animals and prevent poaching of rhino:

1. Intensive patrolling in sensitive areas and filing up of vacant posts.

2. Coordination with other law enforcement agencies.

3. Provision for arms and ammunition, and communication facilities.

4. Conducting nature awareness campaigns for the public.

5. Earning good will and cooperation from the local communities.

6. Constitution of Expert Committee for rhino conservation.